

Wisconsin Technical College System Board
310 Price Place, P.O. Box 7874
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7874

Edward Chin, State Director

ADMINISTRATIVE BULLETIN

Date: June 22, 1999

Subject: Credit Generation and FTE Reporting for Distance Education
(Excluding Closed Circuit)

Contact: Dan Clancy, Assistant State Director
Phone: (608)266-7983 e-mail: daniel.clancy@wtcsystem.edu

Effective: Immediately

Distribution: District Directors
Instructional Services Administrators
Chief Financial Officers
Data Processing Managers
Telecourse Coordinators
ITV Coordinators
Instructional Technology Consortium Coordinators
Satellite/Video Conference Coordinators
AB Distribution List

The current environment of rapid growth in application of technology education presents a number of conditions which create the need for a state agency administrative policy governing granting credits and full-time equivalent student reporting for courses delivered via distance education. Except where specifically referenced, this document does not apply to closed circuit offerings. Among the conditions exerting influence are: a) the ever-increasing electronic availability of programs and courses from educational deliverers from within and outside of Wisconsin; b) Wisconsin technical college districts contemplating electronic delivery of instruction beyond their geographic borders; and c) speculation on the expansion of the system's college parallel programs through electronic means. In order to maintain conformance with the system mission, support program location decision, and preserve the integrity of the state aid formula relative to aidable FTEs, an authoritative document from the state agency is needed to provide guidance to districts in these fluid times.

Distance Education Definition

Distance education is instruction which takes place, by means of telecommunications or other means of communication, including cable, instructional television fixed service, microwave, radio, satellite, computer, telephone, television, video tapes, audio tapes and correspondence. It is limited to instructional settings where the instructor and student(s) are not participating from the same WTCS district campus or off-campus site.

Guidelines for the Policy

In developing the policy, several major considerations were paramount:

- The policy should ensure conformance to the system's statutory mission.
- The policy should be customer-focused by promoting opportunities for students taking the courses.
- The application of the policy should be essentially transparent to the student.
- There should be incentives for districts to broadcast courses.
- The policy should support and encourage interdistrict cooperation and formal agreements to work together.
- The policy should protect the intent of the state aid formula.
- The policy should recognize that not all districts have similar capability to broadcast courses and should establish guidelines for enrolling out-of-district students.
- The policy should continue support for prior program location decisions.
- The policy should continue support for contracted services to business, industry and other customers.

Advantages (Incentives of the Policy)

- Rewards risk-taking.
- Accelerates interdistrict cooperation.
- Serves more district residents.
- Increases out-of-district enrollments for a modest additional cost.
- Increases tuition revenue.
- Provides administrative fee revenue.
- Reduces district cost per FTE in cost allocation reports.
- Operational costs are aidable.
- Capital expenditures are aidable.
- Expanded use of technology.
- System programs may ultimately reach national markets.
- Positions technical colleges to compete with national providers.

**Principles on Granting Credits and FTE Reporting
for Courses Delivered via Distance Education
(Excluding Closed Circuit)**

Assumptions

1. The number and types of educational courses available electronically to any Wisconsin citizen will increase exponentially.
2. Technical college level courses are already being broadcast throughout the state by satellite and other means by non-WTCS entities, by out-of-state educational institutions and others for access by Wisconsin citizens.
3. Wisconsin citizens no matter where they are located may access electronically delivered educational courses.
4. The need of Wisconsin citizens to cost-effectively access technical education opportunities regardless of the technical college in which they reside is substantial.
5. The state agency needs to adopt policies to encourage the initiative of Wisconsin citizens to access electronically delivered instruction.
6. The technical college system needs to ensure that electronically delivered courses and programs available through WTCS districts conform to the statutory mission.
7. The technical college system shall ensure the rigor, quality, and relevance of the content of the college parallel, postsecondary, vocational adult, and non-postsecondary (CP, PS, VA and NP) courses offered electronically by the technical colleges.
8. State staff shall review and approve the credit value of all CP, PS, VA and NP courses offered by districts.
9. Students may receive credit from the originating district for CP, PS, VA and NP courses approved by the state agency.
10. Using the advanced standing process, the district of residence may recognize for credit competencies achieved in CP, PS, VA and NP distance education courses originating from another technical college or other deliverer.
11. Closed circuit courses delivered to businesses or other non-technical college recipients under contract, both in-district and out-of-district, shall follow standard contracting procedures regarding charging and reporting.

Administrative Principles

1. The state board shall approve CP and PS distance education programs for which districts wish to grant degrees and diplomas.
2. Courses offered through joint agreement among several districts on a network, such as PBS, shall be considered to have originated from all districts.

3. Aidability of electronically delivered instruction shall not distort the intent of the general state aid formula.
4. The state agency shall develop a process for districts offering distance education courses to report all CP, PS, VA and NP credits granted to students for such courses.
5. All CP, PS, VA and NP distance education FTEs shall be used in all cost allocation/state aid computations except for the equalization index, which shall be treated as follows:
 - FTEs resulting from enrollments by district residents in CP, PS, VA and NP distance education courses shall be included in the equalization index computations.
 - FTEs resulting from enrollments by residents of other WTCS districts in CP, PS, VA and NP distance education courses shall be included in the equalization index computations.
 - In all cases, FTEs resulting from enrollments by out-of-state residents in CP, PS, VA and NP distance education courses shall not be included in the equalization index computations. Residency shall be determined by the legal residence reported to the state office under the District of Residence Code in the Client Reporting System, not by the location in which the course was taken.
6. Costs associated with CP, PS, VA and NP distance education course offerings shall be aidable.
7. Districts shall not report enrollments by residents taking CP, PS, VA and NP distance education courses from another WTCS college or other deliverer.
8. Courses offered over regional ITV networks, involving joint agreements and/or shared programs across district boundaries shall adhere to the terms of the agreements with regard to FTE reporting. Such agreements are subject to state agency approval.
9. Originating districts may arrange with other districts to provide administrative and support services for out-of-district course enrollees for an agreed upon charge. Such costs would be aidable. Administrative add-on fees may be charged to students. Such fees shall be deducted from aidable costs.
10. Districts shall charge the standard technical college program and material fees to state residents for CP, PS, VA and NP distance education courses. For out-of-state enrollers, districts shall charge standard technical college program and material fees and out-of-state tuition. However, subject to approval by the state director, district boards may establish an alternate distance education fee which is in lieu of and less than out-of-state tuition charges. Enrollees are to be charged program and material fees in addition to alternate distance education fees. Refer to section 11.5 of the Client Reporting System Users' Guide for additional information regarding alternate out-of-state distance education fees.
11. Interdistrict program enrollments generated across district boundaries through CP, PS, VA and NP distance education courses shall not be included in the calculation to distribute supplemental (interdistrict) aid under s. 20.292(fm).
12. A report on the inter-district FTEs generated via distance education will be provided annually to the Administrators' Association.

This document seeks to address only selected issues raised by distance education technology. Other policy documents will be forthcoming. As the technical college system develops a history and experience in managing these issues, administrative procedures may be revised.

Edward Chin /s
Edward Chin
State Director

\\wtcsb\sys\wtcs\ab\ab 99-13.doc